

U.S. Department of Education
2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. David Bolin
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Windemere Ranch Middle School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 11611 East Branch Parkway
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City San Ramon State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 94582-5805

County Contra Costa County

Telephone (925) 479-7400 Fax (925) 479-7469

Web site/URL https://wrms.srvusd.net E-mail sbaltazar@srvusd.net

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. John Malloy E-mail superintendent@srvusd.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name San Ramon Valley Unified School District Tel. (925) 552-5500

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Ken Mintz
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2016 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 22 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 5 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 30 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district.**)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	207	168	375
7	197	163	360
8	204	198	402
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	608	529	1137

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.4 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 81.8 % Asian
 - 2.7 % Black or African American
 - 4.1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 6.2 % White
 - 4.6 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2020 - 2021 school year: 3%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	15
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	18
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	33
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	1241
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Korean, Filipino, Mandarin, Farsi, Urdu, Telugu, Tamil

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
15 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 100 %

Total number students who qualify: 1137

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 7 %
74 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>13</u> Autism | <u>11</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>5</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>27</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>10</u> Developmental Delay | <u>32</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>10</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>9</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>3</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 17
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	45
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 25:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	99%	98%	98%	98%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2021.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2014

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

All students will learn at high levels and become responsible, productive citizens.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

<http://www.gamutonline.net/district/sanramonvalleyusd/DisplayPolicy/1050895/>

17. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Windemere Ranch Middle School (WRMS), home of the falcons, is located in Southern Contra Costa County, in Northern California, in the San Francisco Bay Area. Now seventeen years old, the school facility continues to be a state-of-the-art middle school campus with wireless access throughout, model science labs, an art room, a video production facility, a complete gymnasium, softball, soccer, and cricket fields, all surrounded by beautiful landscaping. Our school community continues to be committed to our mission statement, “All students will learn at high levels and become responsible, productive citizens.” We continuously work on being a professional learning community where teachers, staff, and our administration work together to analyze student data, design instruction, develop assessments, and provide students with additional support to help them reach increasingly higher levels each year.

Our student body comprises a diverse population of self-motivated and hard-working students. They come from well-educated families whose parents work in the technology, medical, legal, and engineering fields. Students and families have high expectations for learning and performance.

Our parents are very active, supporting the school through donations and participation in our Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) and Education Foundation. These groups help facilitate opportunities for students to connect with community partners for extended learning opportunities and provide funding to support courses across all curricular areas. In addition to supporting their students through school donations, many of our families support education through extracurricular tutoring, sports, and community organizations. These extra classes and activities contribute to creating successful, well-rounded students.

Due to the strong academic focus, our reputation for high academic achievement, and the beautiful, safe learning environment, Windemere Ranch Middle has become a destination school for families seeking the best education for their children.

Our students are offered learning opportunities across all curricular areas through engaging and relevant project-based learning experiences. They are supported when needed through our daily end-of-the-day advisory/tutorial period. These periods provide social-emotional learning support one day per week (offerings include games, walking, art, photography, and meditation). Two days a week, they provide academic support where students select the class to attend where they need help. The remaining two days a week the period is an advisory class where students can connect with school culture through leadership lessons and video production shows, both created and presented by students for students. These opportunities support and challenge students to increase their engagement and connection with the student body.

The Windemere Ranch staff has created an engaging learning environment and strives to continue improving our teaching practices to include various strategies. Many teachers use Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) strategies, ensuring that students know how to organize notes through Cornell note-taking strategies, engage in civil discourse through Socratic Seminar discussions, and support each other academically through small group tutorials. Our teachers are trained in Culturally and Linguistically Responsive (CLR) teaching strategies. They employ these strategies with movement, discussion, reading, and engagement techniques throughout the day across all curricular disciplines. For several years, the administration has used Restorative Justice (RJ) practices to promote personal responsibility and a positive connection with academics. A team of teachers is currently participating in training to continue this work within the classroom. Our school and district are committed to making positive, systemic changes in our approach to discipline and its impact on learning and engagement with school. Our student-centered approach as a staff has unified us and fostered a family feel, which translates beyond the staff and ripples through our school community. The dedication of our staff to creating a positive, supportive environment for our students is a strength and makes our school a special place to be.

The National Blue Ribbon School award we received in 2014 has motivated our staff to continue to provide high-quality academics for all students. Students are also motivated to continue to work to their fullest potential. The award has reinforced our reputation as a solid academic and innovative school that remains

student-centered. Our stellar reputation, which helped us receive this award, has helped us maintain and draw additional STEM families into our community, thereby increasing club options and interactions with the community in STEM activities on campus. Some examples of this are Destination Imagination, Girls in Tech taught by PTSA volunteers, and Robotics and Odyssey of the Mind competitions.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas:

The WRMS staff is committed to our mission statement, “All students will learn at high levels and become responsible, productive citizens.” We strive to create rigorous content through a caring, student-centered approach. With content standards in mind, students are offered a variety of ways to learn and demonstrate their knowledge. Many teachers use a standards-based grading approach, allowing students multiple attempts to demonstrate proficiency and mastery through cycles of reteaching and reassessing essential standards. Book clubs and project-based learning allow students to choose what they read and how they will share learned information. Assessments are formative and summative through observations, projects, and tests or quizzes. Using various teaching techniques and strategies allows teachers to observe, gather data, and measure student growth while valuing student diversity and interests.

1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

All of our core classes, a two- or three-period block encompassing language arts, reading, and history, use a workshop approach in both reading and writing. The workshop includes a combination of direct instruction and student-directed learning, allowing teachers to use data to create direct instruction for necessary skills while still offering students choice in reading material and writing topics. All instruction strategies are grounded in research, and teachers strive to use best practices in their instruction. Strategies, such as offering book clubs and reading challenges using leveled books, allow students reading choices within classes, grade levels, and through the school library. We also use whole-class novels, challenging students to identify themes and use textual support to develop responses. Our PTSA has supported reading by funding the purchase of new books each year for all core classes and for our school library. During the year of COVID distance learning, we were able to buy books for all students and distribute them to continue promoting reading and essential skills development.

In addition, each grade level of core students is taught to effectively use our school and district-supported databases to explore topics and conduct in-depth research. Students are introduced to the Modern Language Association (MLA) format to draft papers and create citations and annotated bibliographies. Various online resources are employed to help assess and support essential skills in reading, writing, and grammar (Actively Learn, Newsela, Membean, Lexia, NoRedInk, Fastbridge), and the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Interim Assessments. These were especially important during our year of distance learning and continue to be important as they allow teachers to understand when and how students perform and if they require additional support. This data is used to create lessons, tutorials, and after-school support classes.

All core class grade levels have agreed upon essential standards to drive instruction. These essentials are used to create shared common assessments. In addition to these assessments, teachers use other reading measures (reading fluency and comprehension, vocabulary, and spelling inventories) to evaluate student skills and offer targeted instruction. Students are provided support through peer tutors, small group instruction, Response to Intervention (RTI) tutorials or classes, additional paraprofessionals, and special education support when needed.

1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Our school offers five levels of mathematics: Grade-level courses, Course 1, Course 2, and Course 3, and high school level courses, Algebra 1 and Geometry. All of our math teachers use standards-based grading with a four-point rubric where students have multiple attempts to demonstrate an understanding of the essential standards for each course. We incorporate cross-curricular lessons and activities whenever possible.

Most of our mathematics courses primarily use a flipped classroom model of instruction. Students watch a video preview and take notes for homework; the lesson then gets reinforced and put into practice the next day in class. Students can watch the lecture at their own pace and go back to rewatch it if needed. The flipped classroom model allows teachers more time to work with small groups of students and check the progress of all students. It is also helpful for absent students, making it easier to catch up when they are out. In Courses 1, 2, and 3, there is an emphasis on small and large group discussion, and lessons are discovery-based. Web-based instructional programs, IXL Math, and Khan Academy are incorporated into our Course 1 curriculum to provide students targeted instruction for topics from elementary school that they have not previously mastered. Other web-based instructional programs used to support the student learning experience across math courses are EdPuzzle, Desmos, Breakout EDU, Kahoot, Blooket, and NearPod.

For mathematics enrichment, we offer math-related clubs like Cubing, Strategy Games, Coding, Math Counts, Math Olympiad, and American Mathematics Competition (AMC). Also, our Geometry students volunteer throughout the school year as peer tutors to work with struggling students.

At the beginning of each school year, we use the University of California Mathematics Diagnostic Testing Project (MDTP) tests to check for course readiness. With the data from these assessments, we can let families know where there are gaps in learning, which was particularly useful this year after a year of online learning. Students who are more than a grade level behind are identified at the beginning of the school year and given the option to be placed in one of our two math support elective courses.

Throughout the year, in each of our mathematics courses, we use weekly concept checks as formative assessments and use the results to determine which students need additional support or reteaching. We are able to pull students needing help on specific concepts into reteach tutorials twice a week, where these students can work with the teacher or peer tutors. In addition to concept checks, we use chapter tests and semester finals as summative assessments. As a culminating activity, our Course 2 classes have a math festival at the end of the year to review all of the concepts and celebrate the learning that has taken place.

1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Three years ago, the WRMS science departments implemented the California Integrated Next Generation Science Standards. Students experience three-dimensional learning through standards that fuse the disciplinary core ideas with science and engineering practices as well as the cross-cutting concepts. For example, students apply Newton's Third Law to design a solution to a problem involving the motion of two colliding objects. Key practices include engaging in argument from evidence, using mathematical and computational thinking, analyzing and interpreting data, and developing and using models. Curiosity is sparked through the inspiring questions that prompt investigation. In one lesson, students experience sitting on a skateboard and pushing the wall. They ask: Why do I move backward with the skateboard? Hands-on activities allow students to challenge typical misconceptions through evidence collection and analysis. Students use ball bearings and objects like a racquetball or billiard ball to examine the motion of two colliding objects. With one-to-one devices, students access digital curriculum, including PhET simulations that use a game-like environment to engage student exploration of science concepts like collisions, atom composition, and energy transfer.

In the WRMS science, students apply their ELA and math skills in projects and presentations. Students create a sales pitch for an innovative new kitchen tool and calculate and interpret data on force, mass, and acceleration. Throughout the year students demonstrate their learning in STEM projects--they spark creative solutions to real-world challenges (i.e. Students evaluate how car collisions can be made safer through driver choices and engineering design). Teachers use various tools to give immediate formative feedback to students, such as EdPuzzle, Zingy, and Google forms. Based on essential standards, science teachers hold regular intervention sessions including a focused re-teach session followed by a re-assessment of the standard/skill where mastery was not met yet.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Social Studies is taught as part of the core class curriculum through district-adopted textbooks (History Alive! from TCI), primary resources (from Stanford History Education Group, databases, Library of Congress, and others), and hands-on experiences. Students learn to use various reading and note-taking strategies, including Cornell Notes, outlines, and diagrams, while exploring units and themes of the grade-level content. Students also create interactive group-based projects such as skits, group debates, and presentations.

In addition to regular classroom content, students also experience interactive activities and presentations. Sixth-grade students attend Early Man and Roman Legion presentations, learning about ancient history and observing authentic and replica artifacts. They also virtually visit Hearst Castle through the California State Parks PORTS program. Seventh-grade students attend an interactive Medieval presentation and participate in Plague Day. During this day, they discover more about the time period and the effects of the spread of the bubonic plague in the middle ages. Plague Day is an interdisciplinary activity that partners with our math department. In math classes, the students compare the data related to deaths caused by the actual plague with how the simulated plague deaths are on our campus. Eighth-grade students participate in both Civil and Revolutionary War historical artifact presentations where some students even become soldiers in the war. Eighth-grade students also participate in experiential activities, like a Colonial Fair, Pre-Revolution Town Hall Meeting, and a Constitutional Convention. These activities help bring ancient, medieval, and United States history to life for our students and spark interest in the subjects.

1f. For secondary schools:

Students can participate in various classes and activities that prepare them for high school and beyond. They can participate in the California Junior Scholastic Federation (CJSF), where they complete volunteer hours on campus and outside of school. Participating in CJSF builds a sense of civic duty and teaches responsibility and commitment. In the leadership class and peer tutoring program, students learn the essential life skills that allow them to become leaders and mentors. Our Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) class helps students gain the needed skills to be focused and organized to prepare for college and the work world. After school, the Girls Who Code Class is a community-run class where high school students and volunteers from the Tech community teach girls the necessary skills to be competitive in the technology industry. Several of our tutorials and after-school clubs are student-run, fostering leadership, entrepreneurship, and citizenship, all essential skills for success in their future college and career opportunities. The Model United Nations Club, which is planned and taught by two sixth-grade students and one seventh-grade student, gives the participants a glimpse into world politics and the tough decisions leaders need to make as they create alliances and promote world harmony. The Falcon Flash, our student-produced newspaper, teaches the importance of reporting accurately and fairly the events happening in our school, community, and the world. Allowing students to organize, prepare for, and run these clubs provides them with autonomy, ownership, and leadership skills that prepare them for life and the work world.

One-to-one devices allow students to use research skills intensely and be technically creative in all classes. We emphasize learning for the 21st Century by facilitating rigorous, critical, and flexible thinking to prepare to be well-balanced for success in our dynamic world.

1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our school supports students' acquisition of essential skills and knowledge in various other curricular areas. Our middle school bell schedule has seven class periods and one tutorial/ advisory period each day. This provides our students daily instruction in the standard academic areas, language arts, math, and science, but also daily physical education and one elective period each day in sixth grade and two elective periods in seventh and eighth grades. Elective choices include instrumental (band and strings) and vocal music; world languages (Spanish, French, and Chinese); technology and coding classes; 2D, 3D, and digital art; speech and debate; culinary arts; leadership; and yearbook.

Our Art and Media/Graphic Design electives encourage innovation and invention through the creative process. Students acquire skills and techniques with various art materials and digital platforms; understand art concepts, art history, and cultural heritage; and develop design and craftsmanship sensitivity.

Our physical education (PE) curriculum aligns with the National and California PE Content Standards and is moving towards district-wide common essential standards. Students are guided through self-assessment to establish and develop fitness goals based on individual needs. They participate in group assessments to learn how to support each other in their fitness and skill goals. Teachers use targeted interventions to help students meet and exceed their physical education standards and tutorials to support those students who miss lessons due to illness, injury, or absences.

Our world language department offers French, Spanish, and Chinese languages. It uses common, shared assessments of the essential standards via formative and informative assessments across the curriculum. Assessments include reading, listening, speaking, writing, and project-based assessments using various media. The department partners with peer tutors for additional study. Academic tutorials are also available for students struggling with essential standards. Cultural celebrations with food and costumes occur throughout the year.

Our school offers several elective courses for seventh and eighth-grade students to gain career and life skills. Because we are located so close to Silicon Valley, many of our students will go on to work in the tech industry, and our robotics, computer programming, video production, and computer applications classes all offer students the opportunity to gain insight and introductory skills in these areas of the technology field. The culinary and living skills classes teach students practical life skills, and our forensics class allows students to explore science in an engaging and exciting way.

Our school library accesses materials from across the district to support all curricular areas. The librarian meets with students regularly, teaching them how to use the library and digital media sources in a meaningful and responsible way. Our library is continuously adding to our collection and has added over 1100 books this year, including those having diverse protagonists, authorship, and subject matter. The library supports celebratory events such as Hispanic Heritage, The Freedom to Read, Black History Month, Women's History, and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) History Month during our student lunch periods.

Our music program offers leveled music classes in grades six through eight, including chorus, orchestra, band, jazz band, and music appreciation. Typically, between forty and fifty percent of our students participate each year. Choral and instrumental musicians learn essential skills by decoding complex notation, translating symbols to physical actions, and using sight and sound to provide feedback. Through the gradual acquisition of music literacy and exposure to diverse music, students develop a lifelong love of music.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Our staff maintains a multi-tiered system of support for our students. Conferences are held twice per year to discuss concerns regarding our student population. Additionally, the Student Support Team (SST), composed of administrators, counselors, and teachers, meets regularly to discuss and monitor students. All students are offered academic support on content through tutorials. (See Part VI). For our students who are most at risk, we offer three intensive elective courses where students build confidence in their abilities by utilizing a growth mindset while gaining fundamental skills. These classes are limited to fifteen students and are typically smaller.

Students identified as being one to two grade levels below benchmark in reading and math are offered a place in our reading or math intervention classes. These students are identified using multiple measures, including standardized state exams (CAASPP), District-wide testing (Fastbridge), on-campus grade-level

assessments, and teacher recommendations. Intervention electives complement students' mainstream courses ensuring students continue to receive grade-level instruction. In the reading support class, Lexia Power Up (an individually paced program) and Structured Literacy explicitly instruct students with dyslexia and other language difficulties; this is balanced with readers' workshop to reinforce reading strategies, engagement, and stamina. Additionally, Learning Ally's software aids students in accessing grade-level text. The math support course utilizes Math 180, which uses an algebraic approach to present students with concepts they have struggled with in the past; the aim is for students to catch up to grade level and be ready for Algebra 1 after two years.

In the "Success" elective, students receive lessons and support to improve organizational skills (using a planner and organizing materials) and academic skills (flashcards, mindmaps, test-taking, and managing stress). Students have time to complete classwork and homework within the school day with individual or small-group tutoring. Individual guidance helps students with attendance and work completion issues.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

We have a high percentage of students performing above grade level at our school. Approximately thirty percent of our students are identified and participate in the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program. Roughly sixty percent of our students are in an above-grade-level math course, and approximately forty percent of our promoting eighth-graders move on to high school two full years above grade level. All GATE identified students are placed in clusters for core, where they are offered enrichment and extension opportunities. We have one core class per grade level of high-performing GATE students who have tested into a specialized program called the Academically Talented Program (ATP). These students have the opportunity to work with like-minded students who operate at a more advanced level of thinking and a quicker pace, so they feel challenged and deeply engaged in their learning.

Each curricular class also offers many extensions through the digital curriculum, with additional readings, activities, and extensions used in the classroom for students to take their investigations another step forward. In addition to in-class opportunities, the school has many activities open to all students, often attracting advanced students. These include Science Bowl, AMC-8 Math Competition, National History Day Competition, Scripps National Spelling Bee, various Robotics Competitions, Destination Imagination, Odyssey of the Mind, and First Lego League. We have teams advancing to regional, state, national, and even world-level competitions each year. We have had a National Geography Bee winner, a team go to Worlds for First Lego League, a team advance beyond state level to Nationals for National History Day, and this year we have a team going to worlds for Odyssey of the Mind.

These are some of the many opportunities for students performing above grade level to further their interests, pursue their passions, and advance their learning.

3c. Special education:

Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) receive small group academic instruction and support to access the general education curriculum. Most of our students with IEPs have one period each day to work on individualized educational goals, receive direct support with general education classroom assignments, and ensure student accommodations are effectively implemented. Students may also have access to supplemental curriculum programs targeting literacy and math skills. Special education teachers collaborate with general education teachers to promote student progress and maximize educational benefits for students.

Additional student support is provided with the assistance of paraeducators who work both in the academic support classrooms and general education classrooms to support student learning. Paraeducators may also lead small group instruction within the classrooms under the direction of the teacher to further support student learning.

Specialized services and support are provided based upon IEP recommendations to serve a diverse student population with a wide range of needs, including psychological services, vision, orientation and mobility,

speech and language, occupational therapy, behavior intervention, and other services. Braille specialists work with our visually impaired students to ensure access to the core curriculum and provide support. We also have a school psychologist who assesses students for suspected learning disabilities and sees students for ongoing counseling services to ensure they meet IEP goals.

We have one moderate special day class on campus for students with more significant disabilities. As needed, behavior support, speech/language services, and occupational therapy services are provided, and this class has additional paraeducators to provide comprehensive individual support to these students.

3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:

Our district offers a comprehensive English Language Learner (ELL) program at a nearby middle school for beginning English learners, so this is not provided at our school. However, all of our teachers are Cross-Cultural, Language, and Academic Development (CLAD) certified to support ELL students in classrooms. Some students are offered support in reading intervention electives or other tutorial groups. Differentiated curriculum and accommodations for language deficits such as simplified language on assessments and after-school reading interventions are offered, as needed, for students who are still working to attain fluency in English.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant, homeless), if a special program or intervention is offered:

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Our school engages students in a variety of ways. It begins by providing a safe, positive environment for learning. Students are greeted and welcomed each day by the principal as they enter the school. Our facility is beautifully designed and well maintained. The hallways are bright and decorated with student artwork. The classrooms have matching high-quality furniture and state-of-the-art instructional technology for the students and teachers to use. Our teachers are fully credentialed and experienced, and they love what they do. We have support staff, including school counselors, a school psychologist, office staff, food service workers, custodians, and campus monitors who all support our mission and enjoy working with middle school students. Our school is an engaging place to learn.

Our teachers have the skill and the resources to provide engaging learning experiences. Each day most students participate in hands-on activities. These include projects in their core class, experiments in their science class, real-world problem-solving in their math class, athletic activities in their PE class, and various activities in their elective courses. Music students play their instruments or sing almost every day. The culinary arts classes are learning new recipes and cooking most days. Art students create works of art through drawing, digital art programs, or sculpture and ceramics. Students are engaged in all of these activities.

Students are also engaged in various after-school activities and clubs. Our after-school sports program allows all students that come out to participate. The seasons are five weeks long, and the sports include flag football, ultimate frisbee, volleyball, badminton, cross country, and track. Our clubs include chess, strategy games, GSA, Model UN, drama, linguistics, anime, art, and culinary clubs. All of our clubs are student-run, which provides opportunities for students to learn leadership skills. Participation in these activities is voluntary, and therefore students only sign up for activities that they are interested in, so when the students are participating, they are very engaged.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our families and community are very supportive of our school. Each year parents donate hundreds of thousands of dollars to support our school's mission. The community provides financial support with many companies matching donations by their employees. Other businesses offer funds through special nights where a percentage of their proceeds go to our school. One of our local corporations, Chevron, also provides grants to teachers which many of our teachers have received.

Our students also learn to give back to the community by participating in community charities. A few times each year, our students fundraise and then actually prepare and pack ready-to-cook meals for children in need across the world through the organization "Kids against Hunger." Annual fundraisers and drives include the Sister School Toy Drive, the canned food drive for the Contra Costa-Solano County Foodbank, donations to the Wheelchair Foundation From the Heart program, St. Judes Children's Hospital, and the World Wildlife Fund, as well as a collection of coins for the "Pennies for Patients" program and the "Coins for a Cure" program. Participation in these charity events helps our students build empathy and compassion for others in our community and world.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Much of our success as a learning community is due to the professional culture that has been built over the years. Our mission statement is focused on continuous improvement with the goal of all students learning at high levels. Our staff is proud of our past accomplishments, but we all know that we have still not completed our mission. There is always room for improvement.

Professional development is centered around schoolwide improvement initiatives such as implementing RtI and Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS). Much of our staff development days throughout the year are

devoted to these efforts. However, we also encourage and support teachers to participate in individual professional development around specific curricular areas, instructional practices, and professional organizations.

During remote learning, professional development temporarily shifted to support staff in their understanding of how to utilize learning platforms and integrate technological tools. In addition to the technical support provided, professional development moved to include more work with staff on social-emotional well-being for both our students and our staff.

In addition, we continue to work on building a culture of responsiveness that focuses on the needs of all school staff to serve our students better. Recognizing the need to value all experiences and voices, a team of teachers and administrators have been attending Restorative Justice training. These restorative principles build community, respond to harm, and ensure a safe and inclusive space for listening and valuing all.

4. School Leadership:

Our school has been fortunate to have consistent leadership since the school opened in 2005. Our principal is the original principal hired to develop the programs, hire the staff, and order all the furniture and equipment to open the new school. From the start, he has had a collaborative leadership style, seeking input and striving for consensus on significant initiatives and decisions. We have a leadership team with representatives from each curricular area of the school, which meets weekly to provide input and guidance for our principal. Weekly faculty meetings are held to share information and provide professional development for our teachers.

Our school mission statement, “All students will learn at high levels and become responsible, productive citizens,” was developed just a few years into our school’s existence. Still, it continues to be our guiding principle. Our decisions are guided by our focus on student learning. Our two main parent groups, our Education Fund and our Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) have consistently supported our mission. They have been generous in their financial support of our school programs. Parent donation funds pay for additional class sections to reduce class sizes and allow us to have our extensive elective offerings. They also provide technology enhancements and refreshes to keep our students and teachers using the latest educational technology. The strong partnership we have with our parents and community is directly tied to our community's trust and respect for our principal and our school's leadership team.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

As a staff, we are committed to seeing each other, staff and students alike, as individuals from very diverse backgrounds. We feel that the diversity represented within our community is what makes us unique. We celebrate the various cultures represented at our school each year with our Heritage Night. This is a night where families come together to share cultural facts, traditions, customs, and foods. The evening culminates with performances from several groups showcasing music, dance, literature, and other talents from the various cultures represented at our school.

Our Sixth Grade Core team was part of a district-wide initiative to train the whole staff in Culturally and Linguistically Responsive (CLR) strategies. This team then introduced the rest of the school staff to these strategies, sharing ideas to increase engagement, vary teaching practices, and validate student individuality. All staff also attended CLR sessions during district staff development.

We also had several staff members trained at the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles to promote awareness, understanding, and acceptance of each other. This training helps to highlight the need for cultural awareness and how teachers can encourage understanding of each other in light of our cultural differences within the classroom.

In response to the civil unrest of 2020, all staff and students engaged in monthly schoolwide lessons focusing on identity, inclusion, and battling stereotypes during remote learning. Staff members also formed

a social justice circle to have a forum for staff members to discuss equity and social justice issues and create schoolwide lessons.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

One practice that has been instrumental to our success is our daily tutorial/advisory period. This thirty-minute period built into our schedule at the end of each school day, separate from the regular academic classes, supports all students in their curricular and emotional needs. This practice has become a systemic change that has shown real success in student outcomes. Over the past ten years, it has evolved into two days of advisory and three days of tutorials each week. Teachers have the means and the time to help students achieve with a growth mindset. Students feel buoyed by success in ways we could not achieve before adapting these periods into time for MTSS and the RtI process.

Our two advisory days are similar to a “homeroom” for students. The students are placed in a grade-level advisory class with a teacher for the school year. This teacher becomes another caring adult on campus who supports and encourages each student in the advisory class. Students typically participate in a weekly leadership lesson presented by one of our leadership class students during these advisory periods. These lessons focus on character education. The other day is typically devoted to showing a weekly video show that our video production class students produce. These shows have student-created public service announcements and entertaining skits that showcase the many talents of our students.

Students sign up for three afternoons a week or are assigned to various tutorials based on their individual needs and interests. One day a week, the tutorials are focused on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) needs and offer sessions in many areas, including athletic activities, mindfulness lessons, sessions to work on puzzles or play games, or even simply a study hall where students can relieve the stress they may feel by completing homework. Two days per week are set aside for study hall or academic tutorials to support students in their core curriculum. Many of these tutorials are targeted interventions where students have the opportunity to review, learn, and reassess the essential skills. Teachers work with students in small groups or one-on-one to reteach concepts and give additional practice opportunities to meet learning objectives. Students can re-test to show growth towards standards. Peer tutors are also available at this time. Students who do not need these types of support attend a study hall period where they can work on homework and get help from a teacher if the need arises.

This one practice gives our students academic and social-emotional support, character education, and community building, supporting our mission to have “all students learn at high levels and become responsible, productive citizens.”